In an effort to increase voter turnout, the DHF held candidate forums in the communities of Arvin, Lamont, Lindsay, Woodlake, Sanger, and Parlier. Community members met their candidates for local, state, and national offices representing their communities. The candidates were asked a spectrum of questions related to education, immigration, infrastructure, water, and more.

In partnership with the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center, the DHF launched the Youth and Family Civic Engagement Initiative (YFCEI), a program aimed to increase civic participation among low-income, disenfranchised youth and their families to reduce racial and socio-economic disparities. Through evidence-based best practices, the YFCEI is training youth and family members on meaningful leadership roles and civic participation. A leadership cohort of 200 low-income, diverse young people is being recruited and selected from local middle and high schools in Kern, Fresno, Alameda & Contra Costa counties. They attend intensive civics and leadership classes offered during all school breaks and some evenings and Saturdays. In addition to the classes, cohort members participate in leadership exchanges, public speaking, and community advocacy and have the opportunity to assume leadership roles in community improvement and civic projects.

Youth Civic Engagement Leadership Development

Youth Development Associate, Rebecca Castro, shared positive feedback from some of the new cohorts.

“This is really going to help me with school.”

“This is only the first class, but I already feel like I have learned so much.”

Candidate Forums Hosted Throughout the Central Valley

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Second Latino Majority District Demanded from Kern County Board of Supervisors

The DHF worked with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) in 2016 in a lawsuit against the Kern County Board of Supervisors (KCBOS) under the Federal Voting Rights Act. Kern County’s Latino population has been disenfranchised in the local democratic process for the past 20 years. In 2018, Latinos comprised over 50% of the population of Kern County yet only had one Latino majority supervisory district. In 2011, the Board of Supervisors voted to adopt an illegal district map. The lawsuit concluded with U.S. District Court Judge Dale Drozd ordering the County to work with MALDEF to draw new lines. During the process, DHF submitted maps and data for consideration. As of March 26, 2018, the KCBOS now has two Latino-majority districts. Two Latino candidates ran to fill the open seat in the newly created District 4 in the 2018 Midterm Elections in November. While neither candidate was successful in their bid, the community is gearing up for 2020 and hopeful they will gain representation.

Inspiring communities to build volunteer organizations empowered to pursue social justice!

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Please join the DHF Social Justice Network!
JoinDHF.org

Please support this work at Give2DHF.org
The DHF staff and 136 volunteers, under the direction of Civic Engagement Coordinator, Jess Contreras, collected more than 3,000 signatures for the petition to qualify the Schools and Communities First Initiative for the November 2020 ballot, surpassing its organizational goal. The DHF, in partnership with the California Calls statewide coalition, hopes to fund our schools and local communities by closing California’s massive corporate loophole. The initiative, if passed, will increase state revenue by making corporations pay their fair share of commercial property taxes. Read more at tinyurl.com/WMNL2018SCFC.

In May 2018, DHF Vecinos Unidos (Neighbors United) attended board meetings to advocate for an additional Latino-majority district and the grouping of communities of interest for more fair representation on the Kern High School District (KHSD) Board of Trustees. DHF’s GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Analyst, Sophia Garcia, developed a map using information from the American Community Survey to demonstrate how KHSD gerrymandered boundaries which resulted in the centralized power of the white minority, thereby systematically denying the just representation of historically disenfranchised communities of color. The DHF and communities attended board meetings to advocate for an additional Latino-majority district and the grouping of communities of interest to prevent further gerrymandering. Read full article at tinyurl.com/WMNL2018GIS.

Dolores Huerta was a guest speaker at PRIDE in the PARK, The South Texas Equality Project (STEP) and supporting organizations’ annual, family-friendly, LGBTQ celebration in McAllen, Texas. (Above)

Vecinos Unidos Engage with Central Valley School Districts for Equitable Budgeting

DHF’s Vecinos Unidos (Neighbors United) were active in advocating for education policy reform. Education Policy Director, Cecilia Castro, provided a total of 18 LCAP trainings to prepare Vecinos for the Local Control Accountability Plan (school district budgeting) input process. Vecinos Unidos chapters represented 10 school districts. A total of 207 participants advocated at board meetings and/or public hearings. A total of 74 recommendations were submitted to the school districts and 37 of these were adopted for the 2018-19 school year. Recommendations included increased funding to implement translation services, enhanced Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), the implementation of cultural awareness curricula, training more counselors, and hiring more teachers of color.

Dolores Huerta joined Kerry Kennedy, civil rights leaders, and elected officials from across the nation at the Tomillo-Guadalupe Port of Entry in Texas to demand an end to the inhumane separation of children from their immigrating families. (Above)
Getting Out the Vote in the Historic 2018 Midterms

More than 350 canvassing volunteers helped knock on doors and make calls until the very last minute, in the dark of night, on Election Day to educate and inspire more than 21,000 voters in the counties of Kern, Tulare, and Fresno on Proposition 5 and 10, local measures, and to vote in the 2018 Midterm Elections. Civic Engagement Coordinator, Eliana Honeycutt, was pleased with the overwhelming positive response to DHF’s Call to Action. Friends and supporters traveled from as far away as Los Angeles and the Bay Area to help get out the vote. "One weekend, so many volunteers showed up that we had standing room only," said Honeycutt. She added,"This was a great problem to have!"

Working with DHF partners (the Dolores Huerta Action Fund, California Calls, Million Voters Project, Power California, and Organizing for Action) Vecinos in Arvin, Lamont, California City, Lindsay, Woodlake, Sanger and Parlier participated in turning their neighbors out to the polls, many of them for the first time! They shared information about “No on Proposition 5,” helping to defeat this initiative and retain more than $1 billion for California Schools annually.

Despite the defeat of Prop 10, which would have expanded rent control on residential properties, DHF will continue to work for affordable housing for all.

Dolores Huerta joined Marian Wright Edelman and the Latin Grammy winning, all female mariachi group Flor de Toloache as presenters at TEDWomen 2018 SHOWING UP in La Quinta, California. (Below)

Expanded Organized People Power

DHF organizers continued to grow the volunteer base of the Dolores Huerta Foundation. New Vecinos Unidos (Neighbors United) chapters were formalized in Fresno County: Sanger in 2017 and Parlier in 2018. Greenfield (in Southeast Bakersfield) and California City are the newest Kern County Vecinos Unidos chapters, also established in 2018. Each of the nine Vecinos Unidos chapters continue to host monthly community forums to educate Vecinos on various topics and provide leadership development training and updates on current events.

Youth and Parents Organize in Mojave Unified School District

This year, Carol Watkins, California City Organizer, helped to organize and establish the first predominantly African-American Vecinos Unidos (Neighbors United) Chapter. DHF has been working closely with youth and parents to address the discipline crisis in the Mojave Unified School District (MUSD). As a result, the district agreed to create an African-American Parent Committee. MUSD has the highest suspension rate of African-American students in the state. A shocking 81% of African American students were suspended or expelled in the 2014-15 school year. California City Vecinos achieved great victories through parent engagement and advocacy in the LCAP process. Harshly affected by zero-tolerance policies and the pushout of African American students, parents organized and submitted recommendations to MUSD. Read the full article at tinyurl.com/WMNL2018MU
A Note from the President

I am incredibly excited about our success in increasing voter participation in the 2018 Midterm Elections and to share some of what DHF has accomplished, this year, thanks to YOU - the dedicated donors, supporters, and volunteers of DHF!

Our team continues to grow. We’ve hired new staff for our Youth and Families Civic Engagement Initiative. This project is central to eliminating the school-to-prison pipeline and to changing the course of our youth’s future onto a path to social justice leadership.

We are extremely grateful to the California legislature and Governor Brown for approving funding for the YFCEI project and for declaring April 10 as Dolores Huerta Day in California. Special thanks to Assemblymember, Eloise Reyes, who led the effort.

We plan to use this day to inspire people to learn more about the power of grassroots community organizing and to volunteer in service of their local communities. DHF focuses on educating and engaging voters year-round. It is our duty to empower people to become civically engaged and agents of change in their communities. We encourage the values that make for a just society: acceptance of LGBT folks, caring for the poor, women taking seats at the tables of power, and welcoming new neighbors into our communities, regardless of where they’re from.

In this last election, our years of investing in people-to-people civic engagement work came to fruition in the Central Valley with more Latinos participating in state and federal elections than ever before, including some DHF Vecinos who ran for local non-partisan offices and won! This was in part due to the increase in voter participation of Latinos, young people, and the unlikely and infrequent voters who were encouraged to vote as a result of DHF’s GOTV efforts.

Thank you for being a part of this movement to inspire individuals to achieve justice and equity for our communities.

¡Sí Se Puede!

Dolores Huerta,
President and Founder

First Annual Vecinos Unidos Leadership Conference

In August, 2018 DHF celebrated 15 years as an organization (its “Quinceañera”) and hosted the first annual Vecinos Unidos Leadership Conference in Weedpatch, California. The event brought together over 140 youth and adult leaders from the nine Vecinos Unidos chapters in Kern, Tulare, and Fresno counties. It was a memorable and successful convening that DHF plans to make an annual event.

Chapter members learned from their peers and DHF staff about the past accomplishments of DHF and Vecinos chapters from different regions. Executive Director, Camila Chavez, and other DHF organizers led break out discussions to identify priorities for the upcoming year. In addition, attendees were asked to make volunteer recruitment commitments for the 2018 Midterm Elections. Youth in attendance worked with a local artist, Jorge Guillen, to learn about and create their own resistance art.